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ABSTRACT

This study examines the characteristics, needs, and actual experiences of Latino (Mexican American/Chicano and other Hispanic) students enrolled at California State University, Long Beach (CSULB), through identification of Hispanic demographic characteristics from university records, comparison of Student Affirmative Action Outreach Program (SAA) participants with non-participant Latino peers, and random sample interviews with SAA participants. Although Latino CSULB enrollment grew from 5.4% to 8.7% from 1975 to 1985, Latinos, who comprise 18.1% of California high school graduates, are greatly underrepresented. Of SAA Latino students entering CSULB in 1982-83, 73% had been retained to begin their fourth year in 1985 or had graduated. Findings indicate academic failure/difficulty results from unrealistic expectations, lack of clear personal goals deemed attainable, general alienation from the institutional mainstream, and interference of external circumstances. Factors favoring academic persistence/performance include parental influence, early expectations for higher education, appropriate course scheduling incorporating skills development classes with academic solids, and clear career/major direction. Recommendations offered to enhance Latino student retention include providing academic support programs for new students; staffing programs with professionals; and offering programs with advisor controlled scheduling, supplementary/tutorial instruction, career exploration/planning, financial aid/evaluation, incentives for campus organizational/activity involvement, help in identifying career-related internships, and intensive intervention for unsatisfactory progress. (NEC)

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RETENTION OF THE LATINO UNIVERSITY STUDENT: THE CASE OF CSULB

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1986

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RETENTION OF THE LATINO UNIVERSITY STUDENT: THE CASE OF CSULB

INTRODUCTION

One of the major issues underlying discussions of a number of contemporary concerns in higher education (whether regarding marketing strategies or academic achievement) is the demographic trend being highlighted more and more frequently by the public media in a variety of contexts. Few are unaware of the reality of increasing numbers of non-white residents in the state of California, for example, and the projections that by the turn of the century residents will find themselves in the first third-world majority state, i.e., the first state in which ethnic minority groups collectively will constitute the majority of the state population.

For nearly two decades universities have been a significant focal point in discussions of civil rights and equal opportunity, because of the critical importance of educational advancement as a critical factor in each individual's access to personal and economic opportunities not available to the preceding generation. Since the late 1960's, then, considerable attention has been given to identifying the numbers of minority students completing high school, their performance at that level, those admitted to college and their persistence toward undergraduate and graduate degrees, the nature of the institutions which they attend, and intrinsic factors presumably or reportedly affecting their experiences in college. Special access and financial programs have been created in order to encourage, permit, or enhance college opportunities for traditionally underrepresented student groups. At the same time, because of external accountability or internal concern, institutions have looked seriously and

regularly at the extent to which their enrollment patterns have shifted because of demographic changes and the special measures taken to attract and retain target populations.

California State University, Long Beach, is representative of large urban institutions in the Southwest. One of the largest of 19 California State University campuses and located in metropolitan Los Angeles, it is primmarily a commuter campus attended by over 32,000 undergraduate and graduate, full and part-time students whose median age is approximately 24-26 years. Day and evening instruction and support services are available to students, the majority of whom are employed at least part-time. Demographically, the student body is predominantly Anglo, also typical of universities (especially public institutions) even in ethnically diverse communities of the Southwest.

In California generally, and at CSULB in particular, the most steadily increasing population is also its most underrepresented. For a variety of cultural, social, economic, and academic reasons, over a period of approximately fifteen years, even the special programs designed to increase minority representation (most prominently the state-funded Educational Opportunity Program) have failed to bring a desirable proportion of Chicano students into California's postsecondary institutions, resulting in their being the minority group most excluded from equitable participation in higher education in the state. For that very reason, in the establishment of the Student Affirmative Action Outreach Program in 1979-80 (with the retention component initiated on most campuses in 1981-82), the "Hispanic" population was designated as the primary group to be targeted for service by most campus programs.

Deliberately general guidelines allowed each campus to develop goals and activities particularly suited to its identified needs; furthermore,

it was only through the experiences of campuses in designing and implementing new or innovative approaches that more specific common elements (such as home visits, earlier outreach, faculty mentoring, summer orientations) became characteristic components of many programs. Even so, it has remained the responsibility and the prerogative of administrators to select the components and strategies believed necessary or valuable in the pursuit of outreach, transitional, and retention goals on their particular campuses.

Until 1985-86, CSULB had been unable to track automatically the progress of identified subpopulations through the university. Like most campuses, the institution had kept records of certain categories of aggregate data, such as the size and proportion of Hispanic student enrollment over the years or their cumulative grade point averages compared to other subgroups. But neither the university as a whole, nor individual programs seeking to evaluate their impact on participating students, had a means of collecting the specific individual information which would enable providers to examine the interrelationship of potentially influential factors or elements, or to assess their effectiveness by measuring the accomplishments of their own students relative to a non-participating control group. The absence of a vehicle for individual tracking, for example, even made it difficult to identify the persistence rate of entering students (first-time freshmen or transfer students) within a particular ethnic group or academic major after one, two, or more years.

The study described in the following pages is an attempt to begin to examine the characteristics, needs, and actual experiences of Latino (Mexican American/Chicano and Other Hispanic) students who enrolled at

CSULB by examining as closely as possible a representative sample of identified individuals. The accessibility of information have necessarily delimited the size of this sample, the sources from which it was drawn, and the extent of the analysis. As an initial effort in a relatively unexplored area, it offers or suggests answers to certain questions, but it also raises many others which can only be answered with additional research.

One common limitation in retention studies has been their failure to define what the writers understand as "retention." In this study, retention is defined as insuring the continuous progress of a student toward a carefully considered and defined personal/career goal via academic endeavors; such progress may involve transfer to another institution for undergraduate or graduate work as well as employment and/or the use of a variety of campus resources. Since it was not possible in this study to monitor extra-campus factors (such as the impact of family obligations or support, significant financial or personal circumstances, issues of health or transportation, as well as the involvement of instructional or support resources utilized at other campuses), the focus of this report will be on the persistence of students within the university rather than on "retention."

SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

The research plan for this study involved the examination of three separate, gradually more limited, populations of Chicano and other Latino students (ethnic codes 3 and 4, as designated by the CSU). The outcome intended for the three populations was as follows:

--all Chicano and other Latino students:
general demographic information from statistical university records;
--subgroup of total Hispanic-origin population: SAA participants compared with non-participant peers:
patterns of academic preparation and performance information taken from university records as well as the service profile for those who had been in the program;
--subgroup of SAA participants:
random sample of population interviewed for a more personal report of background and experiences.

The most encompassing group were all university students in these categories, whose profile would consist of those elements which could be determined by examining the Student Information (SI) and Enrollment Reporting System Continuance (ERSC) files, i.e., the total representation of this population in the university over several years and their current distribution by class, major, age, and aggregate performance record.

Secondly, a much closer examination of a select subpopulation was undertaken. That group included those Chicano and other Latino students (hereinafter designated simply as Latino) who had been serviced by the Student Affirmative Action Program's Retention Component during the years 1982-83, 1983-84, and 1984-85.

The initial design of this study included a control group of comparable non-participants identified by the Office of Institutional Research, about whom much more detailed information was requested: schools of origin and prior educational history, dates of application and acceptance, age at time of admission, GPA at previous institution(s), admission status, test scores for admission and university placement,

financial aid status, place of residence, major, academic status (and GPA), semesters enrolled, class standing, total units earned at CSULB, and known transfer information (to or from another institution). For lack of the tracking mechanisms indicated previously, a specific group could not be identified and the information indicated above could not be provided. Instead, more general demographic data were utilized for comparison purposes where appropriate.

For all SAA students, transcripts were requested and examined carefully for course selection and performance patterns that summary data would not disclose and program records were utilized to identify the extent and nature of their program involvement, so that some determination might be made of the impact of those services on their performance.

A third facet of this study was the identification of a representative random sample of SAA participants of the years under consideration, who were interviewed in order to derive a general indication of the demographic backgrounds and institutional integration of those who come to the university with fairly typical experiences. With the interview format, even though the sample was necessarily limited by time and by the availability of students who could still be located, it was possible to consider such factors as size of household, educational and employment history of parents and other nuclear family members, the individual's self-image as a developing student and eventual career professional, scheduling of classes and job obligations while at the university, campus services utilized, involvement in extracurricular activities, perceptions of the institution, and other affective dimensions of the total experience.

In addition to those three basic groups and types of examination and analysis, also included as a distinct strand within the SAA sample was a

population studied in spring 1982 by an SAA team under the supervision of Dr. Phyllis Maslow (CSULB Department of Educational Psychology). At that time an attempt was made to identify academic and external factors characteristic of students whose first semester performance placed them only minimally in good academic standing (2.00-2.25). The students in that randomly selected population received no services from the program, although some were in the Educational Opportunity Program and thus eligible for academic and financial support from the EOP staff and fiscal resources. That group is designated within this study as "high risk."

The Student Affirmative Action Program participant population was chosen as the focal point of this study for several reasons. From a purely practical standpoint, having administered that entire program or its Retention Component for a period of three years and having worked with new students part-time during a fourth year, this researcher was directly familiar with the type and extent of information available within program records and knew that records and access to students could be facilitated. More important, however, that program's population has consistently included a representative cross-section of Latino students: predominantly regular admits, some transfer students, a mixture of financial aid recipients and other students ineligible for the basic federal or state grants, the majority from public high schools and community colleges which enroll large numbers of minority students.

It was unfortunate that the general information accessible via the Institutional Research Office was very limited. However, SAA readily summarized program service records and secured transcripts for all former students and for the "high risk" group. A careful and detailed analysis of those transcripts provided some very useful, if not complete, information about those students who, as stated above, are considered to be generally

representative of the university's undergraduate Latino population. Of those identified as constituting a random sample of program participants (statistically representative of distribution by year of entry, gender, continued enrollment or withdrawal), all who could be located were willing to cooperate. A sample of the interview itself is included as Appendix A to this report. A profile of interviewees comprises Appendix B.

LATINO ENROLLMENT AT CSULB

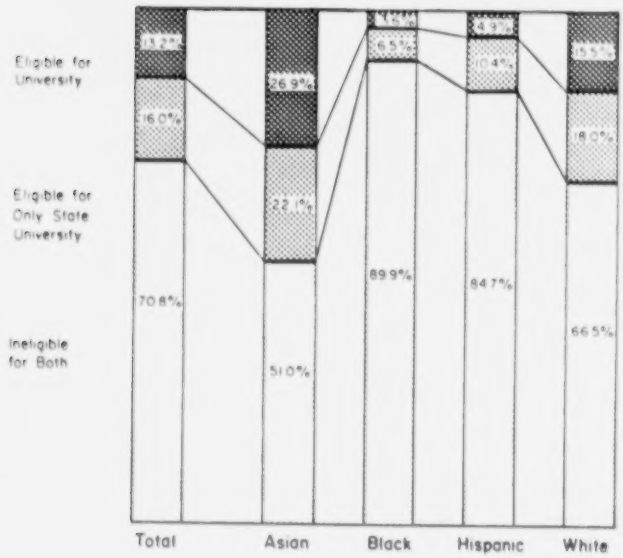
A. DEMOGRAPHIC FEATURES

Much has been written of the educational experiences of Latino students in grades K-12. Researchers have studied not only their comparatively low rate of persistence through elementary and secondary schools, but the numerous factors which presumably affect their continuance or withdrawal from formal schooling: alienation (cultural or personal) from the institution, academic retardation, family economic pressures, migrant labor mobility, the role of differing values from those of the mainstream, or peer social pressure, to name but a few such elements.

While not the principal focus of this study, it is appropriate to note that the pool of California State University-eligible graduates (the top third of high school graduating classes) is significantly reduced by some of these factors. The California Postsecondary Education Commission eligibility report on the high school graduating class of 1983 cites the disproportionately high drop out rate of Hispanic students in grades 9-12 (34%, vs. 22% of white students, surpassed only by the 40% rate of American Indians, who are far fewer in actual numbers). Such figures, though striking, fail to take into consideration the even higher drop out rate which occurs during junior high school or in the transition from junior to senior high; in other words, it accounts only for those still enrolled when the baseline population was identified. As students progress through the educational pipeline, the number of Hispanics entering postsecondary institutions and completing baccalaureate degrees decreases even more dramatically.

An equally drastic reduction is apparent in an examination of university eligibility, where only 15.3% of state Hispanic high school graduates are found to be regularly admissible to the CSU.

California Public High School Graduates
Eligible for Regular Admission to CSULB



It can also be noted that 5.4% of high school graduates (fewer than 4% of the baseline population of 9th graders) actually enter the CSU. Thus even if a reasonable number were estimated to enter other public and private universities, the majority of the CSU-eligible Hispanic population are probably not proceeding directly into universities. Finally, only 1.3% of high school graduates (.9% of the 9th graders) complete their baccalaureate degrees within five years. (Cited in CSULB Network, vol. 37, no. 37, September 18, 1985, pp. 1, 4-5.)

Because of attrition throughout the educational pipeline and because the Latino population tends to be a young ethnic group, the university cannot reasonably be expected to keep enrollment pace with the demographic patterns of its immediate surrounding community (metropolitan Los Angeles houses the largest urban Hispanic-origin population outside of Mexico City). However, its targets can appropriately reflect the ethnic distribution of high school graduates. In the early years of this decade, statewide (figures for the surrounding community of greater Los Angeles are

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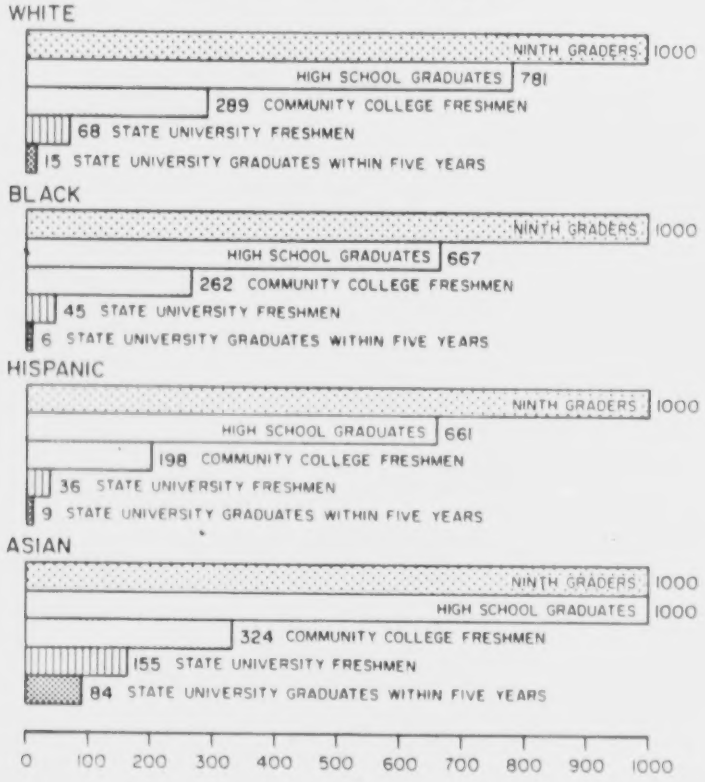
necessarily much higher), 12th grade graduates have been 5.1% Asian, 13.1% Black, and 18.1% Hispanic. CSULB enrollment in Fall 1985 remains nearly 61% Anglo, with Asians constituting 14.9% of the student body, Blacks comprising 5.7% (underrepresented by 4.4% compared with eligiblity rate), and Hispanics the most heavily underenrolled (by 6.6%), constituting 8.7% of campus students, just over half of their target numbers.

Retention Rates of Ninth-Grade California Students Through the Bachelor's Degree


WHITE
NINTH GRADERS 1000
HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES 781
289 COMMUNITY COLLEGE FRESHMEN
68 STATE UNIVERSITY FRESHMEN
15 STATE UNIVERSITY GRADUATES WITHIN FIVE YEARS
BLACK
NINTH GRADERS 1000
HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES 667
262 COMMUNITY COLLEGE FRESHMEN
45 STATE UNIVERSITY FRESHMEN
6 STATE UNIVERSITY GRADUATES WITHIN FIVE YEARS
HISPANIC
NINTH GRADERS 1000
HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES 661
198 COMMUNITY COLLEGE FRESHMEN
36 STATE UNIVERSITY FRESHMEN
9 STATE UNIVERSITY GRADUATES WITHIN FIVE YEARS
ASIAN
NINTH GRADERS 1000
HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES 1000
324 COMMUNITY COLLEGE FRESHMEN
155 STATE UNIVERSITY FRESHMEN
84 STATE UNIVERSITY GRADUATES WITHIN FIVE YEARS
0 100 200 300 400 500 600 700 800 900 1000

Between 1975 and 1985, the campus has witnessed the growth of its Latino enrollment from 5.4% to its current 8.7%, a substantial rate of increase (61%) but actually a very small numerical enrollment gain; moreover, at the growth rate of Hispanic school enrollment, a 3% increase

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over a ten-year period is not sufficient to keep the level of underrepresentation from becoming increasingly greater.

The recent CSU Chancellor's Commission report entitled Hispanics and Higher Education: A CSU Imperative (1984) cites as a relatively universal phenomenon a decline in Chicano (Mexican-born or Mexican American) enrollment masked by a simultaneous increase in the participation of Other Hispanics (Central or South American or Spanish-origin) (p. 3). A report prepared for a campus management committee in 1983 (Le Pard, Nishio and Ramirez) noted that the Chicano population at CSULB remained relatively unchanged (4.9% in 1973 and 5.0% in 1983) while the other Latino group increased considerably (from .5% to 3.1%) over a ten-year period. In Fall 1985, Chicano students were 5.4% of the university, while other Latinos comprise 3.3%. It must be recognized that these are two very divergent (in addition to being individually heterogeneous) populations, representing markedly distinct socio-economic and academic backgrounds and needs. Despite some rather extensive outreach efforts, the campus has not made significant gains in the enrollment of its actual target Latino population, the Chicano; our limited tracking of individuals (through informal, manually-manipulated procedures) suggests that while the institution is indeed recruiting a continuous (if numerically limited) flow of new Chicanos into the university, those numbers are frequently replacing the many who flow out through the same revolving door. Actual numbers of graduates are not particularly high: the Office of Institutional Research indicates that 81 Chicanos and 41 other Latinos received baccalaureate degrees in 1984-85, while 12 Chicanos and 10 other Latinos earned master's degrees.

Schools of origin were reported by Institutional Research only for those students identified by SAA as (former or present) program

participants and currently enrolled. These figures are believed to be fairly similar to the university's Latino population as a whole.

Table 1
Schools of origin

	SAA students	high-risk population
public high school	58.3%	46.7%
parochial high school	20.8%	33.3%
community college	16.7%	6.7%
4-year institution	4.2%	13.3%

All Latinos who did enroll at CSULB were reported to fall into the following subgroupings by age, class level, and major.

Table 2
AGE DISTRIBUTION
(Undergraduates and Graduates)

	Chicano	other Latino	combined total
Under 18	9.9%	7.8%	9.2%
18-24	63.3%	60.9%	62.4%
25-36	22.3%	26.4%	23.8%
37-50	4.1%	3.1%	4.0%
Over 50	0.4%	1.1%	0.6%

Clearly, this is a relatively young population, with 71.6% of it falling below the university's median enrollment age, and a large number of individuals (259) entering at age 17.

Table 3
CLASS DISTRIBUTION

	Chicano	other Latino	total
Freshman	21.0%	16.1%	19.3%
Sophomore	12.9%	11.7%	12.5%
Junior	28.5%	27.5%	28.2%
Senior	25.5%	30.1%	27.1%
Graduate	12.0%	14.5%	12.9%

With both subpopulations, there is a measurable reduction in numbers between the freshman and sophomore classes (63% for Chicanos and 27% for other Latinos, or a combined total of 54%), reversed by a significant

infusion of juniors (a 126% increase). The largest single class of Chicanos are juniors, indicating a heavy transfer pattern at that level with slight attrition at the senior level. Other Latinos are most numerous as seniors; no definitive explanation is proposed, though it seems most logical that the increased numbers would be a function of transfers from other four-year institutions (possibly including a population bringing credits from foreign institutions of origin). A slightly greater proportion of Chicanos (34.9%) than of other Latinos (28%) are lower division students, with the opposite phenomenon occurring at the upper division level (54% Chicano vs. 58% other Latino).

Table 4
DISTRIBUTION BY MAJOR
(Undergraduates and Graduates)

	Latinos	total university
Applied Arts	13.8%	12.9%
Business Admin.	17.0%	20.5%
Education	1.4%	1.6%
Engineering	11.3%	15.9%
Fine Arts	6.2%	7.1%
Humanities	9.0%	9.9%
Natural Sciences	6.2%	4.8%
Soc/Behav. Sci.	11.8%	9.5%
undeclared majors and special programs	22.4%	17.8%

Because of the relative youth and lower division status of such large numbers of Latino students, the high percentage of undeclared majors does not appear extraordinary, though it is somewhat disproportionate to the university-wide distribution of majors. Clearly, however, the relative unfamiliarity of this population with the general university experience does highlight the need for undeclared majors to be contacted and serviced by some type of program since they lack departmental and resource access potentially available to those who identify with a major field of study. If the population of students participating in the SAA program is taken as

representative of a cross-section of Latino students new to the campus, .pa then in excess of 35% of them enter the university as undeclared majors. (See Section D below.)

From the interviews conducted with a random sample of former SAA participants (n=40), additional dimensions may be added to this profile of Latino students in general. Nearly all these students were the first of their generation to attend college (20% had an older sibling complete college first, while the more common pattern was that an older or younger sibling might be concurrently enrolled or might have attended college at least briefly). 35% identified a parent or an extended family member of that generation who had completed a college degree, some in Latin American countries. Their fathers averaged 9.2 years of formal schooling; 60% of them had been educated outside the United States, and only 25% hold or have held professional positions of employment. Mothers averaged 10.5 years of schooling, but only 15% hold or have held professional positions, all of them in education.

Most of the students entered CSULB from large public high schools (85%), but several had attended Catholic schools at some time, generally during elementary school; those individuals consistently perceived a decline in academic standards when they transferred to the public school. 60% reported having first entertained the possibility of college at an early age (before junior high school), even though they had no understanding of that experience, but many were not certain that higher education could become a reality for them until their last two years of high school. The major influences on their thinking were parents and some of their elementary school teachers; very few (15%) reported direct motivational encouragement by high school counselors, and only a minority (35%) indicated that counselors actually assisted them in selecting

appropriate college preparatory courses. Those who were serious students tended to associate with similar-minded peers and found themselves selecting courses, studying, and investigating university options with their close friends, most of whom also went on to college.

Almost all the students interviewed live with parents, principally for economic reasons, but many also do so in response to cultural values maintained in their homes. Their households range in size from two adults (son with father or husband with wife) to a female who is eldest of nine children, some of whom are still in the home with their own infants and toddlers.

Families were generally perceived as being morally supportive of college attendance but often lacking an understanding of study obligations or of the resources (fiscal as well as spatial) to provide for the needs of a college student. Half the interviewees reported having privacy and quiet study quarters; the others are in noisy, crowded environments, forced to squeeze study time between classes and into lunch hours at work or to wait until late night hours for quiet if they don't have an alternate place (like the local library) to study. The majority reported serious family emergencies (illnesses or deaths, divorces or separations of parents or siblings, etc.) during their college careers that, because of cultural realities, had strong fiscal, physical, emotional, and academic implications for them.

80% of the students surveyed work to support themselves, and 32.5% have at some time in their college years had to contribute significant monies to support the family (because of emergencies, parental disability or unemployment). 20% of these had "stopped out" (withdrawn for one or more semesters and returned when they could) or had considered doing so

because of their financial obligations to the family. Students average just over 25 work hours weekly, working most often in the evenings and parts of the weekend; they carry full-time study loads and actually complete an average of over 11 units per semester.

Fewer than half receive financial aid; others are ineligible based on family income (most Latino families remain two-parent households and often involve two working adults, but financial aid criteria generally exclude ways of accounting for extended family obligations not reported to the IRS). Many have experienced emergency changes of status at times when they believed it impossible (procedurally or because of time constraints) to seek short-term status re-evaluations or award adjustments. For those who do receive financial aid, awards are generally insufficient to meet actual expenses; though required to work 20 or more hours weekly, they are still obligated to complete full studyloads in order to collect their grants or loans.

B. ACADEMIC PREPARATION

It is extremely difficult to gauge reliably the academic skill levels of entering students; many Latino educators have taken issue with the validity of standardized college admission tests and similar forms of assessment as indicators of how capable a student is of succeeding in college. Even with their limitations, however, such measures do tell us something of how any particular group of students performs in comparison with others.

It is well documented that Hispanic-origin students nationwide (as individual subgroups or collectively) outperform Black students on both the verbal and math portions of the Scholastic Aptitude Test but that their scores fall significantly below those of Anglos:

Table 5
SAT scores, ethnic subgroupings

	Anglo	Chicano	Puerto Rican	Black
Verbal	442	373	361	332
Math	483	415	396	362

The National Clearinghouse on Bilingual Education (Forum, December 1985, p. 3) has updated the College Entrance Examination Board's published figures (Profiles, College-Bound Seniors, 1981) reporting the largest yearly increase in minority student performance between 1984 and 1985, with the scores of Chicanos having risen from 376 to 382 in the verbal and 420 to 426 in the math portions, the scores of Puerto Ricans increasing from 358 to 368 in the verbal and 405 to 409 in the math portions, while nationwide averages for all students tested increased five points on the verbal section and four points in math.

On systemwide exams, CSULB's Latino students are significantly below their Anglo peers in writing and slightly below them in math. 34.8% of them fail the English Placement Test, necessitating completion of remedial writing development prior to freshman composition, compared to only 16.4% of Anglos. 34.8% of Chicanos and 40.9% of other Latinos fail the junior-level Writing Proficiency Exam (a graduation requirement), vs. 23.8% of Anglos; here failure necessitates repeating the exam until passing scores are achieved, usually through coursework, tutorials, or a combination of other developmental measures. While the results of most institutional exams reflect the preparation of entering freshmen or special action transfers still obligated to complete those tests, the WPE figures include those who have transferred from other institutions, predominately community colleges, many of whom bring with them the completion of basic composition courses and of corresponding local prerequisites. In math, 58.7% fail the Entry Level Math exam (a prerequisite to general education math) compared

with 49.9% of Anglos; failure dictates pursuit of community college or pre-baccalaureate courses or tutorials until a passing score is reached. (Ramírez, "Tutorial and Learning Assistance Services at CSULB," 1984)

On the other hand, despite their eligibility (11.4% of Chicano and 15.1% of other Latino undergraduates meet GPA eligibility criteria), very few Latino students elect to participate in the honors (University Scholars) program, either because of their lack of understanding of what nomination represents or because of their reluctance to confront the presumed competitiveness of such a program.

C. PERSISTENCE AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

1. General patterns

Until 1985, the university was unable to begin work on a tracking system either of all students or of a random sample determined representative of a particular subgroup that would eventually provide accurate indications of individual student persistence within the institution. At present the only available longitudinal study not limited to aggregate data is the systemwide report entitled Those Who Stay (1981). This study reports that of first-time freshmen entering the campus in fall 1973, 34% of regularly admitted Hispanics and 12% of exception admits had earned baccalaureate degrees after six years. This seemingly low rate of completion is not significantly less than that of Anglos in the same cohort, though in actual numbers the difference is, of course, major.

In 1976-77, concern over the visible attrition of Chicano students (whose enrollment had peaked about one or two years earlier) led to the formation of the Chicano Recruitment and Retention Committee composed of Mexican American Studies faculty and Student Development Programs staff. At a time when the release of ethnic student listings was still very

limited, that Committee undertook the tracking of two consecutive entering classes of EOP Latinos (fall 1976 and 1977), a group that it could readily identify. It was found that an average 61% of those students returned for their second fall, and 39% of them began their third year. Given the fact that most of these were special-action admits, i.e., students not expected to succeed by standard university admission criteria, their continuance at these rates was not to be discounted. At the same time, however, the Educational Opportunity Program admitted them on the assumption that with the provision of strong academic support resources they could, in fact, complete a baccalaureate degree. Other (regularly-admitted) Latino students in the university, many of whom entered from the same schools of origin and whose grades and/or test scores were probably only marginally superior to those of the special admits, lacked the program identification and comprehensive services afforded EOP participants. While the complexity of factors involved makes it difficult to ascertain how continuance/attrition figures for non-EOP Latinos would have compared, it is reasonable to speculate that they probably fared no better and may have withdrawn in even greater numbers, left largely to their own resourcefulness (or lack thereof) in navigating the institution.

A strikingly more positive outcome was found in the tracking of SAA Retention Component participants since fall 1982. Of those who entered the university (and the program) in 1982-83 (the majority freshmen from high schools serviced by SAA Outreach staff but including transfer students as well), 73% of the original 48 Latinos had been retained to begin their fourth year in fall 1985 or had graduated; 60% of the 20 who entered the program in 1983-84 (a major change in programming) had begun their third year; and 88% of the 50 who entered in 1984-85 enrolled in fall 1985 for a

second year. Since the EOP population discussed above is overwhelmingly comprised of special action admits, no implicit comparisons should be assumed between these figures and those cited in the previous paragraph. The SAA students were primarily regular admits (89% in 1982, 70% in 1983, and 79% in 1984), though most originated from the same types of predominantly minority inner city schools (high schools or community colleges) as the EOP students.

A more detailed explanation of what the SAA program involves is given elsewhere in this study (Section D, below), but it is appropriate to note that most participating students are identified and contacted based on their being newly enrolled, ethnic minorities (from any underrepresented group). They remain in the program only their first year, unless they ask to continue beyond that time (limited staff resources dictated that procedure). Each student is assigned an advisor who sees her/him regularly, and, in consultation with the professional coordinator, monitors academic progress and refers the student to indicated academic support services and also verifies the student's follow-through on such recommendations. In different years, study groups, skills development tutorials or workshops, social activities, and other special types of programming have been offered, some of them mandatory for a limited number of special-action admits (explanation of this special procedure is also given in Section D).

With respect to academic performance, university aggregate data show that Latino undergraduates collectively receive slightly lower grades than Anglo counterparts, a 3-year average cumulative GPA of 2.48, vs. the Anglos' 2.80, a difference of .32.

Because of the critical importance of the student's first year as a retention determinant (poor performance adversely affects eligibility,

motivation, and self-image to the same extent that academic success enhances these factors), in 1984-85 SAA devised a control group of students not serviced by either that program or EOP, an ethnically comparable population of new students against whose performance that of participants would be measured. Latino SAA students (regular and a limited number of special admits) earned a cumulative GPA of 2.45 in their first year, compared with the control group's 2.25 (all regular admits), both groups having completed the same total number of units (21.4).

The university averages 89% of its total population in good standing, or a probation/disqualification rate of 11%. Within those figures, minority students tend to be significantly overrepresented. Latinos average 85% in good standing, compared with 91.4% of Anglos, in a typical semester; conversely, 15% of them are on probation or subject to disqualification, almost twice the 8.6% Anglo representation (Ramirez, "Tutorial and Learning Assistance Services at CSULB," 1984). The probation-good standing distribution of 1984-85 SAA freshmen is very close to the general Latino averages, with much stronger performance evidenced in the spring semester compared with the fall, presumably the result of students' having adjusted their assumptions of faculty expectations from high school to college and having become more familiar with academic support resources available to them (R. Evans, "Final SAA Mentor Program Report," 1984-85, September 1985).

2. Principal factors affecting persistence

2.1 Information derived from university records

The research conducted on large cross-sections of college students nationwide identified the following factors as significant enhancements of academic success: good high school preparation, good study habits, high

self-esteem, relatively well-educated and somewhat affluent family background, entry from high school directly to a four-year institution, residence on campus, receipt of financial aid grants or scholarships and no need to work, and enrollment at a selective institution (from CSU, Ethnic Data and Higher Education, pp. 5-3, 5-4). Hispanic-origin students nationwide, except the limited numbers of immigrants coming from affluent refugee families, are almost item-for-item the exact opposite. Asked to identify the two main reasons that they or their peers must withdraw from the university, students most highly rated the following factors, in order: need to support self or family financially, lack of interest/motivation/goals, time conflicts with job or family obligation, emotional inability to cope with college demands, academic underpreparedness, and poor academic performance. Asked what the campus might do to assist them, they most commonly cited increased financial aid resources, greater variation in course offerings, simplification of financial aid processing, more convenient course scheduling, more effective instructors, and improved financial aid information (Ethnic Data, Tables 6.4-6.9, 6.12).

A close examination of individual student records (transcripts, and SAA program participant files available) has served to highlight patterns in the following areas:

a. Course selection

Typical semester studyloads requested by new students are generally poorly "packaged," i.e., programs lack the diversity of content and methodology that would enable them to study more effectively and to hone their study skills gradually and sequentially. Instead, students tend to overload themselves with heavy reading courses (generally social science classes, since the familiarity of these disciplines suggests a more

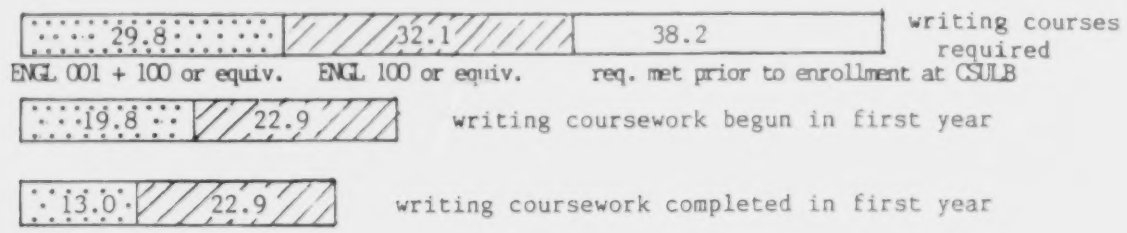
comfortable transition into the college curriculum). Because these are usually courses in which professors evaluate progress infrequently (two mid-terms, occasionally a paper, and the final exam constitutes the most common pattern), the required study reading skills are not apparent until a relatively late juncture in the semester (often mid-term), if at that point students can independently identify the actual cause of their poor performance on the first exam(s). An additional complication in course selection results from the early closure of key classes that might provide a methodological balance (such as speech) or the unavailability of test scores (ELM, EPT) that would allow new students to enroll immediately in math and writing development classes. While this experience is not unique to Latinos, their more limited skills and the lower expectations which they experienced in high school make the consequences more serious academically, especially because of their unfamiliarity with the typical university environment and its resources.

Another result of their limited understanding of the university experience is that Latino students overlook stated prerequisites and co-requisites as they explore the university catalog or each semester's bulletin. This is especially common in science and math courses, where prior coursework in the field (in high school) leads them to select a science option in which they previously did well or the next level in math.

A third aspect of course selection found is the relatively late completion of writing courses, skills development avenues particularly vital to students whose preparatory academic development has been very weak in this area. Because of the critical importance of writing to many other areas (especially the preparation of papers and successful completion of essay exams in a period when universities are deliberately emphasizing the importance of written expression), the postponement of these courses has--

or it should have--a marked impact on general performance.

SAA students, whose advisors insist on their enrollment in writing as early as possible, still averaged their first course in the second semester (the first advisor-approved studylist). 81 of 131 program participants were obligated to take one or two semesters of writing (the other 50 having met requirements prior to transfer or at other institutions while concurrently attending CSULB); of these, 42 were required to take only freshman composition (ENGL 100 or its equivalent), and the remaining 39 were required to take a preparatory course as well. 30 of the "ENGL 100-only" students took the course in the first year, most during the second semester; 26 of the remedial-composition (ENGL 001 or its equivalent) students began the course sequence during the first year, again the majority in the second semester, and 62% of them delayed continuance to freshman composition by one or more semesters after completion of the prerequisite. The following graph better illustrates the extent of delay.



Scaled to a starting baseline of 100 students, of 61 required to take any writing courses at CSULB, 43 took their first (or only) course in the initial year, and only 36 (59%) had completed their composition requirement (one or two courses, as individual cases dictated) by the end of their second semester.

For many students, the delay in completion of writing courses results from the limited availability of ENGL 100 sections (early closure) and

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their unfamiliarity with equivalent alternatives offered in the ethnic studies curricula. But the most frequent reason for the postponement of writing development is avoidance of an academic area in which students feel tremendous insecurity.

b. Course scheduling

Because of work hours, family obligations, shared commuting arrangements, or the seeming efficiency of reduced hours spent on campus, students tend to tighten their class schedules as much as possible, often squeezing a full 12-unit load into three half days or into two full days. Their efforts to do so sometimes contribute to poor course selection as they seek something which "fits into general education" within a particular time frame. More to their detriment, they find themselves with little time to utilize academic support services, to prepare adequately before each class, to attend related activities (lectures, meetings, etc.), to interact academically (study groups) or socially with their peers, or to become involved in their major departments or in the institution in meaningful ways. Lack of breaks, often including a lunch break, reduces the quality of the classroom experience and of any study effort (independent or tutorial) squeezed between classes.

Where advisors have required that continuing students spread out their class schedules more, performance has been measurably affected, seemingly because of the value of the mental and physical breaks as much as because of the created opportunities for utilization of academic support resources. For example, those students who entered the SAA program having already completed coursework at CSULB (n=22) raised their GPA's from 2.15 to 2.52 (+.37) while utilizing program services.

c. Unsatisfactory academic progress

As indicated previously, Latino students are overrepresented on academic probation. Statistically, the heaviest probation patterns occur at the freshman and junior levels, i.e., when students are new to the institution and have not adjusted to the requirements expected of them, or when their relatively late access to enrollment (after continuing students have been serviced) has placed them in a poor assortment of classes for which their interest may be limited or in which they may be ill-prepared. It is probably significant that the proportional distribution of these students is almost equal for the more difficult majors (such as engineering) and for the undeclared category. An undeclared upper division student is in an especially critical situation primarily because the lack of a definite direction is clearly adverse to motivation.

Examination of student transcripts (Latino students entering in years 1981, 1982, 1983, and 1984; n=156) indicates that of the total population (former SAA participants--74% of the sample--as well as the high-risk students--26% of the sample), 35% of them had been on probation at some time during their college career at CSULB, and 3% had been disqualified academically; the 35% averaged 2.11 semesters in that status. A majority had fallen on probation for the first time in their first semester.

Since the high-risk group were students identified in 1982 for their marginally adequate performance during their first semester, that population sample is not proposed as representative of Latino students in general and, therefore, no comparisons with the SAA participants are proposed here. The SAA population itself, however, shows some striking patterns. An overwhelming majority (87.5%) of those ever on probation first experienced unsatisfactory progress in their first semester at the

university. Since 1985-86 was the first year that new program participants received pre-registration advisement or were seen within the first month of instruction, nearly all students in the sample were essentially on their own in that critical first semester in the university (see Section D of this report for detailed analysis of student participation and program services). Data collected in 1984 (Ramírez, "An Analysis of Tutorial and Learning Assistance Resources at CSULB") indicate that in typical year 1983, 3.75% of all university students were disqualified, and that Latino students are overrepresented in that group, constituting approximately 9.5% of it. Of Latino SAA students, however, fewer than 1% have been disqualified academically.

2.2 Information reported by individual students

Additional information about student progress has been obtained through interviews and through the SAA records of what students routinely discussed with their advisors. That information confirms what is reported or speculated on in much of the literature about minority students in higher education and contributes additional perspectives on the topic.

Academic failure or academic difficulty results principally from four types of factors which do not seem to fall into any rank order. Each is complex and broadly encompassing.

a. Unrealistic expectations

A number of critical elements (some discussed above) may be grouped under this heading: mismatched work obligations and studyloads (an average 25 hrs./wk. with 12-14 units/sem.), inappropriate study habits and/or underdeveloped study or academic skills, a false sense of progress within courses enrolled based on norms carried in from the previous level of schooling, and misdirected efforts or energies intended to produce improved

outcomes. Students commonly fail to recognize the difference between high school and college in the amount of time outside of class sessions and the type of study effort which their courseloads require: the distinction between reading material through and studying it carefully to mastery, the need to integrate texts and lecture material, evaluation of facts within conceptual contexts, expectations about their familiarity with and use of supplementary materials or related resources. They also tend to overlook the actual causes of their academic difficulties; conditioned to the notion that "college is much harder than high school," they assume that the mere investment of more time is the key to improved performance.

To some unmeasured and perhaps immeasurable extent, cultural factors (the value of working for what one earns and limiting oneself to what can be obtained in that manner) do play a role in how Latino students (or their parents) interact with the institution's support resources. On the part of many there is the same reluctance to pursue academic support services that there is to seek financial aid--the notion that they should be able to shoulder the obligations of higher education without outside help and, respectful of the professional judgment of the educational institution, that the university would not have admitted them were they not deemed capable of succeeding on their own abilities. This is an especially significant factor and one which merits considerable investigation and discussion beyond the context of financial aid application, the context in which it is most likely to be cited, if at all.

b. Lack of clear personal goals deemed attainable

There are two aspects to the elements which fit under this heading: a general lack of focus (as to career, major, academic steps toward achievement of goals, etc.) and uncertainties about the accessibility of those goals once defined for academic as well as financial reasons. In

some respects these go hand in hand, i.e., one may decline to establish goals out of doubts that they are attainable, or one may perform poorly due to lack of motivation toward a focused direction and thus feel incapable or less capable than others. The literature on minority students' self-esteem is replete with illustrations and discussions of self-fulfilling prophecies (those of teachers as well as of individual students) of failure and defeat, of the dearth of role models in professional positions, especially within higher education, etc. While all these factors are, certainly, no less important than what researchers have proposed for years, work with SAA students has highlighted two features as particularly influential in student performance.

Students interviewed as part of this study, the majority of them A/B students in previous years, consistently cited high school teacher projections that they should expect no better than a "C" average in university work; as a consequence, they began in foundational, skill-building, and introductory courses content to earn C's. Often they found secondary school study patterns adequate to secure grades of C, and so they remained virtually oblivious to the fact that new or more efficient techniques would, in fact, allow them to do far better.

The more prevalent problem for these students, however, is clearly the lack of firmly-established, compatible personal and career goals to be pursued through the university experience. Many have declared majors recommended to them by others (parents, counselors, peers) which may be contrary to personal strengths or values and remained in them because of the presumed marketability of those fields. Others lack outright either any area of professional interest (they are unfamiliar with potential options) or a notion of what they might do after completing a major chosen

strictly on the basis of enjoyment or personal interest. Perceived darkness at the end of the tunnel (or throughout it) can and does produce academic fatalities (withdrawals or failures) unless students are able to resolve their dilemmas either through personal resourcefulness or the fortuitous encounter with a counselor or professor in some campus office.

c. General alienation from the institutional mainstream

This phenomenon is intrinsic to a large commuter institution, but it becomes even more critical for an individual who already feels marginalized entering a complex, ethnically-diverse but predominantly Anglo environment for the first time. Students surveyed, almost universally, reported no involvement in any student organization, neither a departmental, nor an ethnic, nor an Associated Students group. They also reported that they did not attend campus functions of any sort, even if they had been very active in such activities prior to college, most of them because of work schedules (usually evenings and weekends), the inconvenience of returning to campus from home communities, and the lack of close personal ties with other students who might share in these activities. Most study alone, commute alone (because of work schedules), and even have lost contact with the friends from their schools of origin who entered with them but have moved into different majors and, therefore, different courses. Friendships formed at the university tend to be confined to the campus day because of geographical distances and work schedule conflicts.

Latino students also have very little contact with faculty outside of class time. Only one student, the son of two college-educated parents (one of them a college instructor) made a routine effort to get to know his professors and to insure that they knew him. Many of those interviewed offered that their first source of academic assistance in times of need would be their professor or someone s/he recommended, but almost none of

them had proceeded accordingly when facing difficulty in a course already completed. On the other hand, those who had established good rapport with a caring faculty mentor or instructor (especially when contact was initiated by the professor for academic or personal follow-up) did pursue that relationship in future needs for advice, support, or understanding.

The large numbers of undeclared majors has the inevitable effect of reducing departmental affiliation or identification early in a student's college career, the time at which s/he most needs an academic tie. Those who declare majors in their final years no longer perceive a need for close involvement, overlooking the career-related benefit (if not the academic one) of much of what transpires at the departmental level.

d. Interference of external circumstances

Probably the most often-cited cause of student difficulty, outside circumstances are the least controllable factors and frequently also the most powerful ones. By far the greatest external elements are financial needs, be they limited personal expenses or car payments, or substantial contributions to the family's support. Among the more complicated financial issues faced by Latino students is their inability to prove eligibility for state or federal financial aid, either because parents are reluctant to disclose presumed confidential income information (a cultural factor which, under the circumstances, is manifested generally in the lower economic class which defines eligibility to apply) or because award determinations (based on federal tax statements) fail to reflect the actual costs borne by two working parents in a large nuclear or extended family. For those who receive awards, work-studyload mismatches (if potentially manageable) leave no room for emergencies necessitating increased job hours and/or course withdrawals or failing grades; unit deficiencies thus

initiate chain-reactions of unit overloads (second semester or costly summer study) while the cause remains unresolved.

The particular cultural values of the Latino community, which prioritize family identification and needs over individualism and interpersonal obligations over personal advantage, should not continue to be misconstrued as indicative of a de-valuation of education. (See Nathan Murillo, "The Mexican American Family," in Haug and Wagner, Chicanos: Social and Psychological Perspectives, 1971, pp. 79-108). However, their impact cannot be underestimated either. Academic progress is adversely affected by such factors as personal or family emergencies, financial circumstances or values that keep students physically at home, unchangeable home conditions that interfere with effective study, family transportation problems, parental expectations or expressed demands which compete with faculty expectations, pressures to complete college (generally or explicitly within the consecrated four-year calendar, or at all, for those students who are unready for college or academically-disinclined altogether), and still the assumption by some parents that their offspring (especially daughters) don't need a college education, or fear that they are unlikely to see one through to completion.

Culture being a dynamic process, traditional Latino values are undergoing constant adjustment in their contact with U.S. society; however, the high percentage of parents (discussion in Section A) who were fully or partially educated in Mexico indicates that CSULB's Latino student population is still heavily a second-generation group influenced significantly by the home culture, which is itself affected by socio-economic status.

2.3 Factors that favorably impact academic persistence and performance

As summarized above (C. 2.1), the literature on ethnic minority

students in higher education offers a list of factors proven to have a positive impact on the academic achievement of college students; unfortunately, these elements are characteristically opposite to the realities which Latino (and most other minority) students experience and which the institution has little control over. When, in fact, that ethnic student reality is described or analyzed, the inevitable focus falls onto the pitfalls and the failures which result from poor academic preparation, financial and other class-related difficulties, low self-esteem, conflicts resulting from cultural values significantly different from those of the dominant society and, therefore, of the institution, etc.

In order to provide information that is potentially useful in positive ways and, in that manner, to surpass the limitations common to most studies of this type, this report also includes identification of factors that actually do enhance Latino student performance and persistence. Once again, the information which follows is drawn from the detailed analysis of student records (transcripts and program service documentation) and the content reported in individual interviews.

Historically, the literature has discussed the disadvantaged situation of the first-generation college student who lacks both role models and appropriate support from family, and certainly that background does have a powerful impact on the initial experiences in college. Not surprisingly, students interviewed who are doing well academically (grade point averages over 2.5) all cited parents as major influences on their decision to pursue higher education; those doing poorly (below 2.00) cited peers as their primary influences in college decisions and totally excluded any mention of parental support or encouragement in that process.

An analysis of interview data and academic performance records highlights a previously unrecognized correlation that is somewhat more striking: that irrespective of parents' educational background, students who truly believed from childhood or early youth that they were going to college--often, but not always, with parental encouragement--have done significantly better than those who made such determinations in high school. Logically, early decisions produce a mind-set that includes identification with other college-bound peers, more serious approaches to school work, alertness to any available information pertinent to college requirements or realities, conscious selection of college-preparatory courses, and similar consequences. The extent to which early expectations about higher education affect continuance to post-secondary institutions is a question beyond the scope of this study. But, for those who attend, the initiative which results from student expectations alone is apparently sufficient to overcome the reported distinterest of college counselors, any institutional attempt to track individuals into improper academic programs, the family's hesitancy about (financial or academic) accessibility of higher education, and other impediments to performance once the student has entered the university. The following table categorizing students interviewed (n=40) according to initial college-bound expectation illustrates the significance of this factor:

Table 6
Initial college-bound expectation

period	CGPA (CSULB)
childhood/elementary school	2.86
junior high school	2.52
senior high school	2.13

Besides their collectively strong performance academically, the students in the "early expectations" population demonstrated other types of awareness

that influenced their college experience. Asked why they had chosen this particular campus, they offered the universal factors of cost and location, but they also addressed such issues as the quality of the academic area which interested them most or of the institution as a whole, their self-evaluation as not ready for some of the known demands of the University of California or other highly selective institutions, or the extent to which external obligations would have affected their performance on a more distant or more expensive campus.

It might seem that early awareness is a factor of greater concern to outreach personnel than to retention staff who encounter a university student, but in fact there are implications of these correlations for retention programming: knowledge about initial college expectations may permit program administrators to project the amount of initiative that can be expected of a student (to seek direction or assistance, to follow through independently on instructions that may be relatively unfamiliar or complex, to pursue enhancement opportunities as these are made known, etc.) and, similarly, the nature and level of intervention that program staff must provide in order for that individual to maximize the college experience. While these "early college-bound" students may seem to be more secure in their goals and their own resourcefulness, they still benefit greatly from broadened perspectives that include re-evaluation and confirmation of goals and discussions of graduate school or more specialized professional options within their chosen fields.

For all students, but especially for those who considered higher education relatively late (grades 10-12) or were unsure of its accessibility until very late, residential orientation programs were cited as particularly effective means of providing some familiarity with college realities prior to the first semester. It was recognized that these

programs were somewhat artificial--i.e., daily schedules were not those of a real semester, baccalaureate courses were not taken, little or no interaction with continuing students or with faculty took place, university offices were not operating at full capacity, the delicate balance of study and work schedules had been eliminated, commuting complications were removed for the duration of the program, etc.--but they were still seen as highly valuable ways of becoming familiar with the campus. Former participants reported positive perceptions of the campus (friendly, open, studious, large but not alienating) and feeling less lost than most of their peers. By contrast, non-participants' initial impressions of the campus (sometimes still held) were that it was overwhelming, foreign, depersonalizing, and complex.

Another clearly beneficial factor was in the appropriate scheduling of courses representing not only different instructional/study modes but also incorporating a mixture of skills development classes (writing, reading, math) as needed with academic solids (i.e. baccalaureate level general education or major courses), as early as possible within a student's college career. Evaluation of transcripts and analysis of program records showed that in those instances where students began with a heavily skills-dominated curriculum, the transition in the following semester to a program of academic solids was devastating. For students tracked by the SAA Assistant Retention Coordinator at the end of 1984-85, a control group taken from a similar program compared with program participants, a 2.13 fall GPA in predominately skills development and orientation courses fell to 1.67 in a spring program of general education solids; those who began at 1.94 with heavy solids and almost no skills development improved to 2.41 in a subsequent semester of mixed curriculum including attention to study

skills as well as writing and reading development (R. Evans, "Final SAA Mentor Program Report," September 1985).

The third significant influence on academic success was clear career and, thus, major direction. Of the students interviewed, those who had utilized the university's Career Development Center or had found other avenues to explore/confirm a pre-determined major choice or to identify an appropriate career and major reported greater motivation to complete their education and to do well in whatever obligations each individual semester might hold. When asked about the adequacy of their study habits and patterns, they also felt that they were working up to capacity so that shortcomings in their performance were due to external interference. Those lacking career/major direction or questioning existing choices reported that they could do better if their motivation were increased but were seldom able to explain why they felt unmotivated or disinterested in academic work.

D. THE STUDENT AFFIRMATIVE ACTION RETENTION COMPONENT

1. Introduction

A more detailed discussion of the SAA Program is made an integral part of this study for several reasons: the significant representation (74% of students whose transcripts were evaluated and 100% of interviewees) of program participants within the population most closely examined, the uniqueness of the approach taken by that program in comparison with other affirmative action or minority programs, and the measurable outcome differences realized by that program during its existence (statistical differences already cited elsewhere in this report and others indicated below).

Initiated in fall 1982, SAA Retention was established as a central resource which would give 100-200 entering target (underrepresented) students (initially identified from high schools receiving outreach services) a home-base and a principal advisor who would make referrals to other indicated university services or resource persons. Over time, space permitting, a few new students from target high schools who were not from underrepresented groups and significant numbers of underrepresented students from other schools of origin (high schools as well as post-secondary institutions) were incorporated through direct outreach and through special instructionally-related projects which facilitated faculty referrals of their students. Because of staffing and administrative placement, this component has at different times been called the Faculty Mentor Program (presented by teams consisting of a faculty member and a peer mentor in 1982-82), the SAA Mentor Program (staffed by undergraduate and graduate peer advisors and the program coordinator in 1983-84) and the University Mentor Program (provided by undergraduate and graduate student advisors, the program coordinator, and the Faculty Mentor project coordinator in 1984-85).

In spring 1983 SAA initiated a large Probation Intervention Program to provide long-term services to underrepresented students in academic difficulty.

In an effort to examine a truly representative cross-section of the university's Latino enrollment, this study has excluded the Probation Intervention population as a distinct group.

2. Demographic features

The SAA Mentor Program population was selected as representative of the university's Latino students because, except for its population being

limited to new students (the fact that the students included in this study were tracked for one, two, or three years prevents the population from consisting only of new students) for that factor by examining continued progress), it does include a broad-based student population. The majority are regularly admitted; however, because of an extraordinary arrangement begun in 1983-84, SAA Retention also accepted annually a very limited number of special action admits who do not fully meet the Educational Opportunity Program's eligibility criteria (these students constitute 18% of Latinos in the "SAA participant" population discussed). The total group, then, includes self-selected individuals who accepted the invitation to participate either because of assumed need to have a support program or, though independently capable, because they wished to take advantage of all available resouces as well as a group of special admits required to participate; participants include middle income students ineligible for financial aid as well as many receiving the full range of grants, scholar ships, and loans; a majority of the students are young high school graduates (67%), but there are also a number of continuing or transfer students (33%).

Most of the students in the program are first time freshmen (FTF), but others enter as transfer students or are brought into the program by friends after they have completed one or more semesters at CSULB. The demographic profile of the 156 students studied in detail is different from that given previously for all Latino students only in that it is more typical of entering students.

Table 7
AGE DISTRIBUTION

	SAA	all Latinos
Under 18	23.1%	9.2%
18-24	69.2%	62.4%
25-36	4.3%	23.8%
37-50	2.6%	4.0%
Over 50	0.1%	0.6%

Because of the sources from which students are recruited by SAA and the nature of the program (academic transition and orientation), this population is significantly younger than the total Latino enrollment.

Table 8
CLASS DISTRIBUTION

	SAA*	all Latinos
Freshman	70.1%	19.3%
Sophomore	7.7%	12.5%
Junior	22.2%	28.2%
Senior	0.0%	27.1%

* Class standing at time of entry into program

For the same reason given above, as students enter the program they are academically younger than the total population of Latinos on campus.

Table 9
DISTRIBUTION BY MAJOR

	SAA	all Latinos
Applied Arts	13.6%	13.8%
Business Administration	16.9%	17.0%
Education	0.0%	1.4%
Engineering	10.2%	11.3%
Fine Arts	1.7%	6.2%
Humanities	10.2%	9.0%
Natural Sciences	2.5%	6.2%
Social/Behavioral Sciences	12.7%	11.8%
Undeclared majors and special programs	31.4%	22.4%

With such a heavy predominance of freshmen, the large undeclared proportion (70% of the "undeclared majors and special programs" category, or 22% of all SAA Latinos) is not alarming. It does, however, indicate a need for various types of services, as discussed elsewhere in this report.

3. Program features

Participating students are assigned a principal advisor as soon as they enter the program, and they are expected to meet with that advisor at fixed intervals to average approximately one meeting per month; those deemed academically marginal on entry or experiencing difficulty are monitored more frequently until their performance suggests the sufficiency of the usual calendar of monthly appointments. Sessions with advisors include academic progress evaluation (evidenced by work completed, grades received, services utilized, etc.), referrals to tutorial, learning assistance, counseling, testing, learning disability, career guidance, financial aid, or other advising staff within the program or in other campus offices, mid-term grade evaluations requested of faculty, course selection and scheduling assistance, verification of completion of basic university requirements (placement tests, general curriculum requirements), discussion of advisement provided by major department, and basic career exploration with undeclared majors. At each visit the student is given a copy of the file report of that session, including recommendations to be followed before the next meeting, and her/his next appointment.

Serious or complex matters are referred to the program coordinator (full-time professional staff or faculty) as are needs for diagnostic assessment (of skills or of academic or personal difficulty). Since they have signed contracts to keep appointments and to follow advisors' recommendations, students who miss appointments are contacted immediately by letter, sent either home or through one of their instructors, whichever is most efficient. Any known academic problems (such as professors' grade reports or tutors' reports of absence or difficulties) result in immediate contact with students and firm recommendations or instructions for dealing

with those areas.

Generally, then, in addition to its proactive efforts to prevent foreseeable difficulties, the program takes a very intrusive, directive approach to establish sound foundations and academic patterns believed to have long-term benefit to students who generally spend only their first year with SAA. Limited staff resources discourage longer-term continuance in these special services. (Even with additional resources, however, it would not be consistent with the program philosophy, which is to facilitate student access to the diversity of the mainstream university, for them to remain in SAA for their entire undergraduate education.)

The other aspect in which the program is unique is in the establishment and maintenance of faculty involvement. Based on the belief that faculty are the key "players" in student retention efforts, the program has consistently viewed and utilized faculty as mentors, academic advisors, assessors or diagnosticians, consultants to tutors or peer advisors, instructors in special projects, and as sources of student participant referrals. The cooperation of faculty has been solicited not only to monitor individual progress but also to accommodate supplementary instructional tutorials, skills development workshops, orientation programs, or other means by which the program has sought to provide the academic support services that enable students to meet the high academic standards of their instructors. Outcomes of such efforts have been very positive so that most faculty welcome the opportunity to work with the program.

Most students enter the SAA Mentor program during their first semester at CSULB, although the coordinator continues to recruit additional students during their first year of enrollment. Of those participating in the

program between fall, 1982, and spring, 1985, 83% began their involvement during their first semester on campus, but their class levels were somewhat diverse. At time of entry, program participants (n=118) had completed the following amount of coursework at CSULB (those who entered with several semesters completed were either returning after having "stopped out" or were referred by friends who had been in the program the previous year).

semester 1	83%
semester 2	5%
semester 3	7.7%
semester 4	1.7%
semester 5	1.7%
semester 6	0.9%

The large majority of these students were freshmen (see Table 7 above), and that class level included both recent high school graduates and a far lesser number of individuals who had enrolled for one or several semesters of college-level work, sometimes on a part-time basis or in non-transferable courses.

While, ideally, the program has always recognized the importance of initiating contact with students as they enter the institution and begin to plan for their first semester, practical considerations of access to student identification and administrative changes within the program have, at times, delayed that process. The first year Faculty Mentor Program (1982-83), which drew almost exclusively from target high schools and a select few community colleges, contacted students at a very early juncture, but in more recent years that timeline has been adjusted.

Table 10
Initial student contact with SAA staff advisor

	82-83 (Faculty)	83-84, 84-85 (Peer)
pre-semester	15%	5.4%
first 2 weeks	45%	10.8%
weeks 3-4	17.5%	12.3%
after week 4	22.5%	71.6%

Initial contact dates ranged from the period of pre-semester orientation and registration to the final week of instruction, in preparation for full participation the following semester. The relatively late initiation of students into the program progressively limits the advisor's options with regard to course selection and/or continuance; at CSULB, for example, no new courses can be added after the fourth week (if such additions were academically advisable) to replace courses dropped, but academically recommended withdrawals are likely to affect financial aid eligibility. In very recent semesters, nonetheless, regularization of what began as an innovative, pilot approach has permitted more comprehensive services and more frequent student contact, a combination which has continued to provide the strong outcomes reported previously in this report and in section D.5 below.

Over the three-year period examined, students averaged 1.84 semesters in the program, with a minimum participation of less than one semester and a maximum of four semesters. They saw their advisors an average 7.53 times each, approximately once each month (an academic year average of 8.2 meetings).

Advising sessions included an average of 3.2 academic progress reviews per semester. Every student received registration advising for the following term. In addition, from either the peer advisor or the professional staff coordinator, students received the following services:

34% were advised about university exams (English Placement Test, Entry Level Math test, Writing Proficiency Exam--one or more)
28% were provided personal counseling related to family emergencies, home conflicts, personal problems, housing difficulties, or health matters affecting their academic performance
24% required career counseling or assistance in choosing or changing their majors
21% sought help with administrative procedures (registration problems, grade changes/appeals, transfer evaluations, etc.)
19% sought assistance with financial problems
13% received assessment of academic skills or evaluation for possible learning disabilities

In the area of instructional support, skills development tutoring (in math, writing, or study skills) was provided, statistically, for one of every two students (some receiving assistance in more than one area while others required none). Course-related tutoring was requested or advisor-recommended in one course for an average of 76% of the students, with the heaviest demand falling in the social sciences (38%) and in math/science (26%).

In addition to direct services which program staff resources provided, students were referred to appropriate offices or individuals that could offer more specialized services or meet other needs. Diagnostic assessment by SAA advisors or program administrators resulted in individual student referrals to the following services:

71% to other tutorial programs
18% to professors or departmental advisors
15% to test preparation workshops
13% to the Career Development Center
11% to study skills workshops (Learning Assistance Center)
07% to the Adult Learning Disabilities Program
06% to the Financial Aid Office
05% to the Counseling Center

4. Academic preparation

Compared with total university and general Latino averages on the entry level exams in English and math, SAA students have achieved lower pass rates in English and higher ones in math than both groups. Their

average score on the English Placement Test is 146 (one point above the minimum pass of 145), but 45% of those taking the test fail it and are required to take remedial writing courses (vs. 34.8% of all Latinos and 16.4% of Anglos). When asked to indicate areas of weakness or hesitancy, even before scores were obtained, students tended to identify writing as a skill in which they expected to need assistance or development. Those in greatest need of improvement were often those most reluctant to take writing courses; likewise, the stronger achievers readily enrolled in composition, occasionally completing a remedial level not required of them either to enhance their confidence or to initiate writing development prior to the receipt of EPT scores that ultimately made them eligible for freshman composition.

In math, SAA Latinos (42 individuals in the group studied were subject to the new Entry Level Math test requirement) averaged a score of 34.8, somewhat below the pass target score of 38. However, only a minority (43%) of them failed the exam on the first attempt, a better performance than all Latinos (58.7% failing) and Anglos (49.9% failing). In the case of the ELM, scores tended to be widely disparate, so that very strong performance (more than 50 of the 60 items correct) are counterposed with extraordinarily low scores (below 20). As has been the case university-wide, the weaker math students postpone taking the exam as long as possible, suggesting that pass rates may be marginally higher than they would be if all students subject to the ELM had actually taken it (as with the mandatory EPT compliance). However, the attention of SAA advisors to these requirements has produced a fairly high level of compliance with the exam and prompt referrals to workshops, remedial coursework, and tutorials for those students who fail their first attempt.

5. Persistence and academic performance

While actively participating in the SAA retention program, students earned an average GPA of 2.51 while completing 11 units per semester. Those in the first year Faculty Mentor Program (1982-83) have averaged a cumulative GPA of 2.40 for 11.5 units throughout their enrollment, while those in the latter two years of a peer mentor program (1983-85) have maintained a slightly higher cumulative GPA of 2.49 with a moderately reduced studyload of an average 10.4 units.

A recent persistence rate for all Latino students at CSULB is not available, but systemwide data for the California State University and the University of California might be considered general indicators for purposes of evaluation. In Fall 1985 UC Berkeley's Office of Student Research reported a record-high second year return of 82% of Chicanos and 83% of Latinos from the freshman classes of 1980-81 and 1981-82 ("An Overview of Freshman Persistence and Graduation at UC Berkeley," October 9, 1985). The same document cited a five-year persistence rate (continued enrollment or graduation) of 51% of Chicanos and 53% of Latinos, compared with 34% and 38% in the CSU for the same groups.

Within the SAA population examined for this study, striking numbers of program participants have either graduated or are still enrolled: 73% of those who entered the program in 1982-83, and 80% who began in 1983-84 or 1984-85. In chart summary form:

Table 11
Persistence rates: SAA

	enrolled Fall 1985 or graduated
entered 1982-83 (48)	73%
1983-84 (20)	60%
1984-85 (50)	88%

Table 12
Comparative persistence rates, UCB, SAA

	Berkeley	SAA, CSULB*
began second year	82%	85%
began third year	73%	71%

* aggregate data, Latinos entering program in 1982-83 and 1983-84

Special admit SAA students show improved retention by comparison with the sample special action admit population referred to on pp. 19-20 above. Those serviced by SAA have persisted as follows: 67% have completed two years and begun a third year (comparison group, 39%), and 71% have completed one year and begun a second one (comparison group, 61%). Of this group (not admissible by general university standards), 70% completed a year or longer in the SAA program in good standing, and 30% either left it or remain in it on probation.

It is not known what percentage of all CSULB Latino students have ever been on probation nor for how long; figures given in Section C of this report indicate only the average number on probation in a typical given semester (15%).

An examination of the complete academic record of SAA participants indicates that 34% of those in the Faculty Mentor Program (1982-83) were on probation for an average 2.2 semesters, beginning most commonly in their first year but during the semester in which they had minimal contact with advisors. 32% of those in later cohorts of the program averaged 1.58 semesters on probation, a shorter period probably the result of the more frequent and more directive interventions begun within the program in 1983.

Table 13
Probationary Status - SAA

	ever on probation	average duration
Faculty Mentor Program (1982)	16 of 48 (33%)	2.2 semesters
Peer Mentor Program (1983, 84)	16 of 50 (32%)	1.58 semesters

All those who entered the program in good standing (for university coursework completed prior to participation) left it in good standing and raised their GPA's from 2.15 to 2.52. All who entered on probation left in good standing, having raised their GPA's from 1.73 to 2.58. Students who entered the program new to the university either left the program or completed the spring 1985 semester (some still to complete their first year on campus in fall 1985) 84.4% in good standing and 15.6% on probation (of these, 8.9% were regular admits and 6.7% special admits).

Table 14
Academic Status

entered program	program beg. GPA	program end GPA	Sept. 1985 good standing	Sept. 1985 probation
continuing students				
good standing	2.15	2.52	100%	---
probation	1.73	2.58	100%	---
new students	0.00	2.30	84.4%	15.6%

Of those students involved in the "high risk" study identified earlier in this report, i.e., who earned GPA's between 2.00 and 2.25 in their first semester (prior to the initiation of SAA retention services), 49% of them were currently on probation in Fall 1985 or had left the university in that status. 54% were either currently enrolled or had graduated; 46% left the university prior to completion of their program.

While attention is appropriately directed to the difficulties and needs represented by poor performance, it must also be noted that the cumulative GPA of 20.3% of the SAA students in the three cohorts here discussed is above 3.00, so that one-fifth of them meet eligibility criteria for the University Scholars (Honors) Program.

E. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

For nearly two decades, educational institutions and personnel have been particularly conscious of a reality frustrating to them because of its complexity: the historical and continuing exclusion of particular population groups from equitable participation in higher education. As university training has become a more critical means of socio-economic mobility and professional development, it has come to be viewed as the national norm rather than as the privilege of a select few, and almost as a civil right of any U.S. resident. As university access became an issue for Latino students, attention was also focused on what has been transpiring nationally at lower educational levels: lesser academic achievement, high drop out rates, financial hardship, the general quality of inner city education compared to that afforded more prosperous communities.

The initial thrust of universities to expedite changes was a well-known outreach effort, both targeting predominately minority schools for special visits that involved minority representatives and also developing a wide range of special programs primarily to generate more applications into higher education from within the minority community.

CSULB, with its size and its strong commitment to civil rights and affirmative action, has been in the forefront of institutions securing whatever resources were made available to support special outreach efforts. The services of these programs have enhanced woefully inadequate counseling staffs at high schools and community colleges, generating applications not only to this institution but to all segments of higher education in California and to major public and private universities nationwide.

Only in later years has more serious attention been paid to what happens to those students initially brought in to the university through

affirmative action programs. While limited retention resources have existed for many years (Educational Opportunity Program counseling and tutoring, Student Special Services tutoring and limited counseling, and, most recently, Student Affirmative Action advising and instructional support components and the Minority Engineering Program), and these have undoubtedly had an impact on student performance and continuance, there is a general lack of specific information about the effectiveness of such resources. The newer programs (SAA and MEP) are perhaps only now in a position to begin that process; those more established have not completed longer-term studies or have not disseminated findings so that known patterns or outcomes might be utilized to determine needs and effective strategies for addressing them.

Available data on Latinos in higher education have generally been aggregate figures which exclude a clear picture of their retention and of patterns that affect academic outcomes. With the resources already invested in generating applications and admissions to the university, the retention of those new populations of historically underrepresented students becomes an academic, a moral, a fiscal, a social, and a political imperative. This study is an effort to begin identifying the needs and experiences of Latino students who enter CSULB. Inevitably, however, such information logically suggests or begins to give form to possible institutional responses to improving not only retention rates but also the quality of students' educational experiences.

The most broadly significant conclusion of what has been presented is the need for more information, for tracking and studies of identified random samples of the Latino student population (and of many other groups). In total figures we do know what our enrollment has been, but we actually

know relatively little about persistence rates and have not yet gathered or brought together what information may be available about performance. With a focus on retention rather than on access, this study does not address questions about pre-college preparation, the possible impact of changing admission requirements on eligibility, nor the numbers of Latinos who are accepted to CSULB but never enroll (or who enroll but never attend).

In the discussion of retention statistics and of the efforts which a public university does or might pursue, it is appropriate to acknowledge that only prestigious large universities or small private colleges tend to have high retention rates. To some extent, it is in the very nature of large public institutions that a tremendous variety of students enroll in them for a wide range of long and short-term goals, so that a high attrition rate may be reasonable and natural. However, for students whose stated intention is a degree and who enter the university with expectations about the manner in which and the calendar within which those goals can be met, a responsive institutional perspective is called for. Based on the research which this study reflects, the following recommendations are offered to enhance Latino student retention in particular. Clearly these campus responses would benefit any student, though the practicality of massive-scale implementation is questionable.

1. Provide new students (or those experiencing difficulty) a basic academic support program as their first point of contact.

A comprehensive academic support resource program is a key element to improve the performance of Latino students and, concurrently, their persistence in the institution. Most of the potential elements of such a program already exist within many universities, but they are generally not "packaged" as an integrated program except to the extent that individual staff members in affirmative action or other academic support programs

refer students to supportive colleagues in other offices to secure needed services.

Students coming from familiar home communities into an institution the size of CSULB, especially, require a "home base" program and an individual staff member within that program who takes responsibility for their general direction and the supervision of their progress. They are usually unprepared for the multiplicity of offices whose functions are not recognizably distinct nor for the myriad details of requirements, procedures, and expectations for which they become responsible upon arrival as university students. One identified program, then, is needed by each individual as a central place where s/he can receive all basic information, report problems or needs, ask questions, and also feel accountable for follow-through. Lack of follow-through on the part of students is generally not deliberate carelessness but frustration when turned away without functional alternative direction or given incorrect information, compounded by the number and complexity of obligations to be remembered, a new and overwhelming experience for most.

The function of the "home base" program is broad but fundamental: a basic intake or holistic assessment of needs and interests and the prescription of a comprehensive program of long- and short-term activities (academic and non-academic) and services identified to meet those individual needs and goals. The particular structure through which a university provides this type of service to entering individuals is less important than the existence of adequate resources; however, it is evident that a fragmented approach (either multiple similar programs separately administered or highly specialized individual units that require student to seek out many different--administratively uncoordinated--offices or

programs) is both inefficient and ineffective. Logically, the program must provide one or more of the most basic services with its own staff, probably academic advising and follow-up. For other services, the program might have an established network of contact service personnel in other university offices to whom the (needs-assessed) student is referred personally and who are responsible for reporting back to the originator of the referral.

The research presented here suggests not only a comprehensive, holistic program but also an approach which is visibly directive based on the premise that staff do have information and expertise superior to what the student brings into the university. The matter here is not whether the attitude or interpersonal dynamic between advisor and student is appropriate, but rather that the staff member assume rightful authority which the student knowingly accepts when s/he enters the program. Because of cultural values, Latino students are generally respectful of and responsive to such an approach.

2. The program requires professional staff if it is to meet the needs of students effectively.

At CSULB as at many institutions, many academic support programs or services operate with a majority of student staff; this is done because of fiscal constraints, because of the belief that students sometimes relate best with other students, as well as because of the explicit desire on the part of some programs to provide students employment experience and revenues as part of their university endeavors. Students can and do represent a valuable labor pool and, with proper training and close supervision, can be very effective providers of certain academic support services (especially advising and tutoring).

However, individual records (performance as well as contact with

advisors in an existing program) clearly reveal a difference between what students report as their honest evaluations of a particular situation and what an advisor must deduce as the more complete or the more accurate assessment. This pattern relates to academic problems as well as to areas of interest, career inclinations, etc. where only an experienced professional would recognize root causes or incongruities. For these reasons, not only should initial intake evaluation be done by professional staff, but periodic follow-up contact while the student is seen primarily by peer staff is still in order. Student staff remain minimally skilled paraprofessionals irrespective of the training they may receive.

The basic services provided by this staff cannot (neither in practice nor in philosophical theory) replace or minimize the needed complementary expertise of a major advisor, a learning specialist, the student's instructors, a financial aid counselor, a career counselor, a licensed psychological counselor, specialized diagnosticians in diverse curriculum areas, health professionals, and representatives of key student organizations functioning in different areas. All these are essential resource persons who must be identified (individually rather than by office, so that they are personally familiar with basic program goals and personnel who direct students to them) and made part of a university-wide effort to impact Latino retention and performance. In an era when technology and impersonal efficiency predominate in more and more businesses and professional activities, a disconcerting phenomenon to many, the Latino continues to hold tenaciously the value placed on personal interaction and on developed trust in individuals worthy of her/his respect. Students interviewed reported unanimously that in any academic or personal difficulty, they would seek and accept help only from someone they

knew well (most cited were extended family members, long-term friends, and respected advisors or instructors). Working with students (and staff) in this personalized way is more time-consuming and, therefore, more costly, but in the long-run it is more economical because students will actually use the services and are more likely to remain in the institution. For many, it is the only factor which will retain them.

3. A comprehensive program, if it is to be truly effective, requires a number of critical components, some provided directly and others obtained through referrals to the individuals identified above.

The research conducted in the preparation of this report suggests that, as the university experience is complex--and becomes even more so for students who enter with academic, financial, psychological limitations--what appear to be purely academic outcomes (grades received or degrees completed) are in fact a product of the interplay of diverse factors. If the goal of a program is retention (persistence to achievement of a personal and career goal through academic pursuits), then it must address all of the major elements which directly impact the ability of students to reach their goals. The collective experiences documented in this study indicate the following components as essential:

a. Advisor control over academic scheduling and monitoring of progress so that courses are chosen appropriately and any likely or actual difficulty with studyload (because of course obligations or external factors) is considered and addressed immediately.

b. Supplementary instruction and/or tutorials (both arrangements focusing on study skills and study grouping, possibly through a common course content so that both skills and material are reinforced) for at least two of the courses in which students are enrolled during each of their initial semesters (mandatory if grades are below "B", if not for all

students) to teach or reinforce skills that will be essential for all future coursework.

c. Career exploration and planning for all students, even for those who enter with definite expectations, to insure that goals are clear, suitable, and attainable in the context of an individual's abilities, values, and personal interests; this is a long-term process which may need review and re-consideration as the student becomes directly involved in the major.

d. Regular contact with faculty outside the classroom, whether in social, departmentally-specialized, instructionally-related, or informal mentoring contexts, so that students learn how to interact with faculty and get to know university professors as potential role models (even if from diverse backgrounds) and also as key resource persons for many of their needs or interests. This is also a valuable means of heightening the awareness of faculty to the academic realities and the diverse cultures that Latino students add to the university community.

e. Immediate referral (and follow up) to counselors, financial aid advisors,, learning specialists, instructors, administrative offices, etc. as these are indicated by student needs or interests.

f. Encouragement (incentives if they can be identified) for students to become involved in organizations and activities so that they will begin to feel a part of the institution but also so that they will become more aware of all that is ongoing and benefit from such opportunities.

g. Assistance in the identification of and access to career-related internships as a means of professional preparation, career exploration, and/or financial benefits that support the pursuit of the academic goal.

h. Financial aid evaluation (initially and subsequently) to insure that students are receiving all types of support to which they are entitled,

especially if personal/family circumstances change or if the universal financial disclosure format does not properly reflect their situations.

i. A more intensive intervention format for students who are not making satisfactory progress, including other types of services as the causes of their difficulties might dictate.

4. University-wide standards and staffing formulas in all programs if there are multiple campus resource programs.

The concept of "equal educational opportunity" indicates that there should be uniformity in the quality of the services provided, i.e., that the coincidence of assignment to a particular program does not determine the product received by any individual. Such a goal may require that several programs have certain basic (proven) elements in common, uniform staff selection criteria and training, at least partial record-keeping and evaluation processes, and that they cross-share information and ideas through some regularized formal and informal arrangement.

5. Appropriate timing of interventions, which is critical to their effectiveness.

The impact (and, therefore, the value) of interventions provided is greatly affected by the timing of those contacts, particularly the initial one. Students are most receptive to direction when they feel most needy, and one of their most needy moments is their first official obligation as university students, usually their initial enrollment. More importantly, however, our research has shown that an advisor's control over a semester's schedule is a major key to maximizing follow-up and the utilization of instructional support resources; academic supports are better invested establishing strong foundations than remediating problems or salvaging partial outcomes.

The nature of total services provided and the length of time any

student remains in such a program must be determined on an individual basis; if there are ideal formulas, they have not yet been found. It does seem appropriate that there be a complete checklist against which each student's needs and progress are evaluated before s/he is directed or encouraged elsewhere. The ultimate goal of the program is to mainstream a successful student who is ready to utilize all available resources in the pursuit of her/his goals. For some, the establishment of that foundation may take as little as one year; for others it may require more than two years.

6. Consideration of cultural background and its impact.

It is not appropriate within this study to present a comprehensive discussion of Latino cultural dimensions, which are many and varied because of diversity in socio-economic level, duration of residence (family and individual) and life experiences in this country, and specific national origin. However, one feature of Hispanic-origin cultures does merit recognition because of its foundational importance to the majority of students who pursue higher education and because any program which neglects or overlooks its importance will become more limited in its effective interventions with target students.

More than any other cultural value, the family stands as the single most important unit around which all of life revolves. In a society in which people are far more important than other values (material gain, punctuality, etc.), family members (nuclear and extended) are the most important people whose needs and desires come before all else. This reality has been misconstrued to represent any number of assumed cultural value characteristics that affect education, such as the notion that parents selfishly want their children to work and support the family rather

than to advance themselves, or that the older generation doesn't consider education important at all.

In reality, parents do want their children to have every advantage that they themselves didn't have, and they have the potential for becoming valuable allies rather than opponents of academic goals. It is when their offspring enter college and become totally estranged from the family and its values, when family really don't understand the demands of college study, or when students come to resent the "interference" of family needs and expectations with their academic obligations, that problems arise in which the family may find itself an unwitting antagonist to academic pursuits. Thus to whatever extent the institution and its programming can address the family as a consideration, its retention efforts will be enhanced. Such efforts as parent orientations, tours, and opportunities to meet faculty and staff before the initial semester begins, occasional contact with family by mentors or advisors when feasible, open discussions with students about the conflictive situations which may compete for their time, and better faculty understanding and appreciation of the cultural obligations which their students bring to the university all would serve to strengthen student academic progress and, ultimately, retention.

Retention is an all-university effort, and it is one which requires the participation of all segments, not merely of those formally charged with the provision of student services or academic support resources. What has been proposed above would benefit all students, certainly, but it is critical to any effort to improve the true access of Latino students to higher education after they have been accepted into the university. It is presented as a total package, because while anything less than a holistic approach to services would have at least temporary benefit, the long-term

value of retention efforts is dependent upon the combination of a comprehensive approach with ongoing monitoring of student progress and experiences. Broader institutional responses, such as increased faculty, administrative, and professional staff role models or the greater appreciation on the part of university employees for the cultural values of Latino students, would then constitute ideal environmental enhancements of the retention benefits which academic support services provide.

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Spring, 1986

APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW

Part A

1. How many persons are there in your family?
   How many live at home with you?
   How much schooling did your parents complete? When?

   What kind of work do other members of your family do, or have they done previously?

2. Has anyone in your immediate family attended/graduated from a college or university? Who? When? Where?

   Does your family support your college attendance (moral support)? Are they anxious for you to finish? What do they expect you to do when you complete your education?

3. What schools have you attended before college?

   What kind of student did you see yourself becoming as you progressed through junior high, high school (& community college)?

4. As you were growing up, what kind of career did you see yourself having?

   When did you begin to think you might go to college?
   When were you sure?

5. What factors and which individuals influenced you the most to attend college? How?

6. What role did counselor(s) in high school and community college play in
   --encouraging you to go on to college?

   --helping you get the necessary academic preparation?

7. Did many of your friends go on to college? Where did they go and how have they done?

Part B

1. Where do you live (have you lived) while in college? Describe/explain details.

   Was there anything happening where you lived that helped or hindered your ability to devote yourself to school work?

2. How do you support yourself while in school?
   Do you receive/have you applied for/are you eligible for financial aid?

3. Do you work? Where?

How long have you been there?
How many hours weekly? When?

How many units have you generally carried with that workload?

4. Where and when do you study?

What changes in that pattern would you make if you could?

How effective do you think your study habits are?

5. When you entered the university, what was your goal?

What influenced you to choose that goal?

Have you changed it? How/why?

How did you go about deciding on those changes?

6. As you were selecting classes to enroll each semester, where did you seek/find help or advisement?

Were there semesters when you were on your own? Did you find some differences in your work those semesters?

How valuable was the help you did receive?

7. As you were taking classes in the first semester or first year, did you feel confident about your study skills and your academic skills enabling you to do well in classes?

Did you really understand what the professors expected of you in studying for exams, preparing assignments, etc.?

What kind of grades did you expect to get in college?
What did you consider ideal (your target)?
What constituted "minimally acceptable"?

8. How much have you sought professors outside of class (office hours) to discuss your performance in their classes, to get any help you might need, or just to discuss your personal/professional interests or goals?

9. What student or departmental organizations have you participated in? How would you evaluate that experience as part of your involvement in the university?

10. Have you used the university's tutorial services?

    Have you ever tried to get help and been unable to find it? (explain)

    Where would you go for academic help if you needed it?

11. Have you ever used the Career Planning Center?

12. Have you ever sought help with a personal situation from a person or office on campus?
    Have you ever wanted to do so and hesitated? Why?

    Where would you go for personal counseling if you needed it?

13. What other services on the campus do you remember using? (explain)

14. Is there any area now in which you would like assistance?

15. Do you attend special events on campus (games, plays, exhibits, performances)? Did you do so before coming here?

16. If you left the university permanently or temporarily, what reasons did you have for doing so?

    (What enabled you to return?)

17. If you are still pursuing a BA/BS degree or have already completed it, do you have any plans or interests to continue your education with either another degree or some type of professional training?

18. What were your initial impressions of the university atmosphere?

19. Why did you choose to attend CSULB in particular?

20. In general, can you think of anything that the university could have done to make your experience here more effective, more productive, or more complete? Or were there any major barriers or obstacles that you can identify?

APPENDIX B

Profile of students interviewed

CLASS STANDING	at program entry	at beginning of Fall 1985
freshman	75%	45%
sophomore	5%	20%
junior	20%	30%
senior	--	--
graduate		5%

ACADEMIC STATUS AT TIME OF ENTRY	
first time freshman	65%
continuing student	15%
new transfer student	20%

ADMISSION STATUS	
regular admit (clear)	85%
special admit	15%

AGE	at program entry	currently
17	10%	
18-24	85%	95%
25-35	5%	5%

YEAR OF SAA PROGRAM ENTRY (PROGRAM COHORT)		
1982-83	(Faculty Mentor Program)	15%
1983-84	(Peer Mentor Program)	25%
1984-85	(Peer Mentor Program)	60%

SCHOOL OF MAJOR	
Applied Arts and Sciences	10%
Business Administration	15%
Engineering	12.5%
Humanities	10%
Natural Science	5%
Social & Behavioral Science	12.5%
Undeclared	25%
Liberal Studies	10%

MEDIAN GPA 2.62

AVERAGE SEMESTERS COMPLETED 2.7

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